



## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES**

**December 14, 2021 | 3:00 p.m.**

**\*VIA CONFERENCE CALL\***

Toll Free: (252) 987-4062

Conference Code: 822 067 049#

### **MEMBERS PRESENT**

Karen Cherry, Chair  
Aaron Tomarchio  
Angela Sweeney  
Henry Fawell  
Julian Boykin  
Laura Van Eperen  
Sen. Cheryl Kagan (Rachel)  
Stuart Page  
Secretary Kelly Schulz

### **MEMBERS ABSENT**

Justin Meighan  
Capt. Eric Nielsen  
Del Kris Valderrama  
Leonard Raley  
Tom Sadowski

### **MMP STAFF**

Tom Riford  
Robert Scherr

### **COMMERCE STAFF**

Sherri Diehl  
William Chen  
Lutisha Williams  
Carolyn Hammock  
Liz Fitzsimmons

## **I. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL / WELCOME GUESTS**

Meeting was called to order by Chair Karen Cherry at 3:06 p.m. Executive Director Tom Riford called the roll for attendance. Quorum was established. MMP Partners and new agency Planit were welcomed.

## **II. SECRETARY OF COMMERCE UPDATE**

Secretary Kelly Schulz extended greetings and holiday well wishes to everyone. She expressed to the Board that Maryland is finishing 2021 on a very strong note, so she wanted to share a few things about the state of our economy and our business community in these last few weeks of the year. First, the most recent job-growth data for Maryland was terrific.

She mentioned that we have added 15,700 private jobs in October, our biggest gain since November 2020. The previous month's gains were also revised upwards, so Maryland is up 18,300 jobs from where we were approximately one month ago. The Baltimore metropolitan area added the most jobs, with 10,100. Secretary Schulz provided an update regarding the unemployment rate. She stated that it fell to 5.7%, and with schools reopened, continued vaccination and booster shot availability, we should see that number fall in the coming months.

Statewide, according to Secretary Schulz, we're continuing to see great news in our manufacturing sector, even throughout the pandemic. Maryland ranked first in manufacturing growth in our region, and was the only state in the region to gain manufacturing jobs from 2015 through 2020. Even during COVID, the number of manufacturing establishments in Maryland continued to increase, with 23 additional establishments opening in 2020.

The next thing Secretary Schulz mentioned was the fact that we've given more than 9 million COVID-19 vaccine doses in the state; 99.9% of all seniors in Maryland have received at least one dose. She continued to say that 90% of all adults have received at least one dose, and vaccine booster shots are available for all adults across the State – hoping everyone is planning to get theirs, if they haven't already. Vaccination rates and availability of boosters should ease concerns about a resurgence of the virus this winter.

Just this past week, confirmation was received that Constellation will be staying in Maryland after the Exelon split and will once again have its headquarters in Baltimore. So not only will there be another Fortune 500 company head-quartered here, there will be a Fortune 200 company. Secretary Schulz expressed other recent business wins to include Alertus Technologies, a home-grown Maryland company that's moved its headquarters to Baltimore from Prince George's County and plans to double in size to about 210 employees over the next four years.

Secretary Schulz shined the spotlight on Tradepoint Atlantic as great things continue to happen there. She mentioned that over the summer, U.S. Wind announced plans to develop 90 acres to support the MarWin offshore wind project. That space will be used

as a deployment hub and for steel fabrication. Choptank Transport expanded in Easton, in which she attended the ribbon-cutting last month, and they have been a great business partner and a great partner to the community on the Eastern Shore.

The Secretary mentioned that there are more announcements in the works. She shared that the State has promoted Maryland's assets, businesses, and people through a special section in Forbes magazine. This article, which was published in October, highlighted the community of innovative companies, world-class higher education institutions, strategic location, and natural beauty that make Maryland a unique and attractive place to do business.

In conclusion, Secretary Schulz closed by noting that at the Maryland Department of Commerce, we spent much of this year continuing the important work of bringing hundreds of millions of dollars in financial relief to small businesses, restaurants, hotels, artists and arts organizations across the state who were still struggling due to the COVID-19 pandemic. But, we never lost focus on our core mission, and our team kept working hard to bring new jobs, new economic growth, and new prosperity to our State. And the MMP being an invaluable partner all along, she extended a "thank you" again for their commitment to the State of Maryland.

### **III. GREETINGS AND PRESENTATION FROM PLANIT (New Ad Agency)**

The Planit team provided a brief introduction of team members and a few ideas of what to expect moving forward. Liz Borcik who is the Account Director introduced Melony who explained that, regarding media, talks are taking place with past vendors to gain historical data as well as talking to new vendors to see what targeting capabilities are available to build a plan to present in early 2022. Trevor, the Associate Creative Director shared some ideas as a sample for advertising that consist of the idea of "Here, here!" It's celebratory on its own and follows the State's declaration that Maryland is Open for Business.

For example, this is how "Here, here" takes shape:

- Did Someone Say, Relocation...Here, here!
- Did Someone Say, Planning for Workforce...Here, here!
- Did Someone Say, Innovation...Here, here!
- Did Someone Say, Quality of Life...Here, here!

Sherri Diehl asked if any of the Board Members have any initial thoughts on the developing concepts for the new ad campaign. Laura Van Eperen expressed that she liked the direction that the ad agency is going with the messaging. Angela Sweeney and Chair Karen Cherry mutually agreed on the quality of life aspect of the ad.

#### **IV. ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS**

##### **a. Approval of Minutes from September 30, 2021**

Chair Karen Cherry asked for any comments and a motion to approve minutes from September 30, 2021. Mr. Henry Fawell moved to approve the minutes. Ms. Angela Sweeney second. No opposition. Minutes approved and accepted.

##### **b. Approval of the 2021 MMP Annual Report**

Chair Karen Cherry asked for a motion to approve the 2021 MMP Annual Report. Mr. Tomarchio moved to approve the 2021 MMP Annual Report. Mr. Fawell second. No opposition. 2021 MMP Annual Report approved and accepted.

##### **c. Financial Report (Leonard Raley, Treasurer – report presented by Tom Riford)**

The financial update presented by Mr. Riford on behalf of Treasurer Mr. Leonard Raley for the period ending on September 30, 2021. They are as follows:

###### **On the revenue side:**

- Total partner contributions paid in FY2021 are: \$850,001.
- Partner contributions paid in FY2022 (*to-date*): \$413,001.

###### **On the expense side:**

- Total expenses \$1,047,468. This reflects expenses for media placements, web, HZ and Planit agency hours.

###### **Expenses planned through December 2021:**

- Media Buy for 2022 (\$2M)
  - Includes planning, creative, and management fees
- Completion of the HZ media buy and website
- Contracts with Abel Communications and Robert Scherr - \$13,750/month
- MMP Sponsorships including: Military Bowl, Maryland Five at Fair Hill, Valley Meadow Farm TV Show and PRSA - \$72,000
  - Total Media Expenses (CY2021): \$1,983,990.03
- MMP's Current Balance: \$3,105,957.68

Chair Karen Cherry asked for a motion to approve and accept the financial report as submitted. Ms. Van Eperen moved to approve the financial report. Ms. Sweeney second. No oppositions. Financial report approved and accepted.

## **V. MMP UPDATES**

### **d. Executive Director's Report (Tom Riford)**

Since the last Board meeting back in September, the Commerce has done a great deal of social media and posts in all of the platforms, *i.e.*, Google, LinkedIn, Instagram, etc. Many of the posts have a lot to do with MMP companies. There has been significant new “press,” specifically the Forbes Magazine insert. Also, there have been several great announcements of new business from the Commerce team of Maryland’s economy.

### **e. Partnership and Contract Updates (Robert Scherr)**

- Secured 2021 partnerships and renewals - \$218,334
  - BGE \$75,000 (One Year)
  - Kaiser Permanente \$50,000
  - Weller Development/ \$33,334 (One Year)
  - Merritt Properties \$25,000
  - Eastern Watersports \$15,000
  - High Rock \$15,000
  - Independent Can Co. \$ 5,000 (New Partner)
- 2021 Losses - \$360,000
  - Howard Bank
  - MedStar
  - Perdue Farms
  - Royal Farms
- 2022 Losses - \$80,000
  - Morgan Stanley
- In-processing/on-going 2021 Renewals \$150,000
  - Cisco Systems
  - University of Maryland Medical Systems
- 2021 Upcoming Renewals - \$250,000
  - Brown Advisory
  - Cisco Systems
  - H&S Properties/Harbor East
  - WR Grace
- 2022 Renewals - \$568,334
  - Bozzuto
  - Ellin & Tucker
  - Independent Can Company
  - Merritt Properties
  - St. John Properties
  - University Systems of Maryland
  - Weller Development/Baltimore Urban Revitalization
- 2023 Renewals - \$1,648,000
  - Clark Construction

- Eastern Watersports
- Howard Hughes
- M&T Bank
- Maryland Energy Advisors
- MEDCO
- Peterson Companies
- Route One Apparel
- Tradepoint Atlantic
- Transamerica
- T. Rowe Price
- Whiting – Turner
- 2024 Renewals - \$15,000
  - High Rock

Stuart Page of BGE commented on the split between BGE with parent company Exelon and how BGE is no longer able to be the Game Changer sponsor, but is still excited with working the MMP on a per/year basis.

**f. PR Report (Abel Communications/Staff)**

Greg Abel from Abel Communications shared that their company focuses on press coverage and offered congratulations to the new ad agency (Planit). Emily provided an overview of the Scope of Work to focus on National and Trade Media Relations, Thought Leadership and Account Planning and Strategy. As a continuation, the program goals remain the same, i.e., increase national awareness, highlight Maryland businesses and act as an extension of the MMP team. Over the past quarter, Abel Communications have had the pleasure of meeting with the following companies to work on quality of life stories, etc.:

- Berlin Economic & Community Development
- Tradepoint Atlantic
- SOCSoter
- MDOT
- Garrett County Department of Business Development
- University System of Maryland
- Grow & Fortify
- Garrett County Board of Commissioners
- Independent Can Company
- Maryland Realtors

Stories in Expansion Solutions Magazine as well as Site Selection Magazine. There was also earned media coverage, including with Christine Ciavardini of Maryland Energy Advisors appearing on WBAL 11 news with tips on rising heating costs. Print included the Washington Post doing a feature story about CyberSecurity and Cyber Monday. Also, the firm arranged a live interview with Chinese online NTD Television and Secretary Kelly Schulz discussing Maryland and manufacturing.

## **VI. VOTING OF OFFICERS**

Chair Karen Cherry asked for a motion to vote on the slate of officers. All executive committee members have agreed to continue in their current roles. Chair Karen Cherry asked for a motion to approve and accept these slate of officers. Ms. Sweeney moved to approve the Board Members. Mr. Page second. No oppositions. Slate of officers approved and accepted.

Chair – Karen Cherry  
Vice Chair – Laura Van Eperen  
Treasurer – Leonard Raley  
Secretary – Aaron Tomarchio

## **VII. NEW BUSINESS**

Chair Karen Cherry ask for a motion to extend Robert Scherr's contract for one-year. Mr. Boykin moved to approve the extended contract for Robert Scherr for one- year; Ms. Van Eperen second. No oppositions. Contract extension approved and accepted.

Chair Karen Cherry ask for a motion to extend Abel Communications contract for six-months. Mr. Fawell moved to approve the six-month contract with Abel communication; Mr. Boykin second. No oppositions. Contract extension approved and accepted.

Chair Karen Cherry ask for a motion to accept the Inter-Agency Agreement between Commerce and the Maryland Marketing Partnership. Mr. Tomarchio moved to approve the Inter-Agency Agreement; Ms. Sweeney second. No oppositions. IAA approved and accepted.

## **VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Karen Cherry extended a motion to adjourn the meeting. The business meeting adjourned at 4:02p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for March 2022, exact date TBD.

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